

Swine Flu Sample Guidelines for Alaska

- Collection of specimens for swine influenza is not different from usual collection procedures for influenza. Recommended specimen collection sites follow.
- Nasal washings, aspirates, nasopharyngeal swabs are preferred. Throat swabs are satisfactory. Use flock swab(s) included in our UTM kit, place swab into Universal Transport Media.
- ASVL has a limited supply of UTM. Any commercial viral transport media may be used, as long as it has not expired by the date of collection. Please be sure that it is to be used for viruses.
- Flock swabs are preferred for specimen collection, but any swab may be used as long as it is **not cotton, and not on a wooden stick**. Flock swabs, universal transport media, or viral transport media can be purchased directly from numerous suppliers, including Fisher Scientific, Diagnostic Hybrids, Becton Dickinson, and VWR.
- Be sure to label the specimen container. Unlabeled specimens can't be processed.
- Store specimens at 4 degrees C. Ship with cool packs.

If you are able to perform rapid testing for influenza, please do the following:

- Check your supplies. I would anticipate that demand for testing will increase in your facility. I would further anticipate that national demand for commercial kits may exceed manufacturer's supply, and delays in receiving product may occur.
- Please use the following bullets to guide decisions regarding referral of specimens to ASVL:
 - If a rapid test is positive for flu B, no further testing or referral is necessary.
 - If a rapid test is positive for flu A, definitely send that specimen to us.
 - If the rapid test is negative, and there is a travel history to an affected area, definitely send that specimen to us.
 - If the rapid test is negative, remember that rapid tests are only about 70 % sensitive, and you may want to send these specimens to us as well, to look for other viruses, as well as influenza.
 - Please indicate any rapid test results on the request form, as well as any travel history within the past 10 days.

ASVL's goal is to keep pace with testing specimens as they arrive. Respiratory specimens will be tested to determine whether they are positive for influenza B, or influenza A. If they are positive for influenza A, they will be sub-typed to determine the human hemagglutinin sub-type. Any swine H1N1 viruses will test negative with our human sub-typing reagents, and would be sent to CDC for further analysis. Reagents for detection of the swine H1N1 influenza variant have not yet been distributed to the state public health laboratories.

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